



Region 3

October 2014

Volume 2, Issue 2

Outreach Division of School Improvement

Important Dates

Family Friendly Application	10/24
SBOE approves grades	10/15
Great Indiana Shakeout	10/16
School Safety Week	10/19-25
Algebra workshop (WCIESC)	10/20
ELA workshop k-5 (WCIESC)	10/21-22
ELA workshop 6-12 (WCIESC)	10/23-24

Special points of interest:

- ◆ Engage families in the educational progress of their child.
- ◆ Build relationships with community partners.
- ◆ Coordinate services to provide supports to all students.
- ◆ Engagement and Involvement are NOT the same thing.

Welcome Back!

Hello to everyone! Welcome to the October newsletter, which will focus on Family and Community Engagement. Increasing community partners is an initiative of the Outreach team directly from Superintendent Ritz. We know that having family and community involvement has tremendous impacts on student achievement. Superintendent Ritz is very vested in this initiative that she has designated staff for this very task. Leroy Robinson is championing this cause and looking for schools that have strong family and community partnerships as well as providing support to schools that need assistance. Please read through the newsletter for tips and ideas on how to engage families and community partners in the process. As always, please don't hesitate to call, text, or email for anything.

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Click the box to take you to the Indiana Department of Education Youtube Channel. Subscribe to see more videos.

Effective Use of Data

This month, I want to highlight Turnaround Principle 8, Effective Family and Community Engagement. You can find more information on our [webpage](#) also. It is so important that schools have partners in the process of student achievement.

When discussing ways in which to engage families and community partners, we must realize how important it is to leverage the power of these

stakeholders. They provide strong support and help remove barriers that some students face. Removing these barriers can play a vital role in accelerating the academic and personal growth of all students.

There is a great deal of coordination in supporting the whole child. For the purpose of this month's newsletter, the

focus is on how to engage, involve, and inform families in the educational progress of their child. Additionally, we will focus on how to build relationships with local community partners to help coordinate services.

Make sure to click the pictures. Many of them are directly linked to organization pages!

Family Engagement

What we have found in our school visits last year is that schools typically have great ways to communicate to parents, but the 2-way dialogue is inconsistent. To engage families is more than just sending newsletters and posting information on a webpage. It needs to be more meaningful. We want family members to be actively informed and included in instructional decisions of their student.

Family nights are important for relationship building, but consider adding a component to your family nights that educate your parents about strategies to use at home. You may also want to share data and show them how to look at data.

The biggest question to ask yourself is: “What are we doing as a school staff to actively engage parents in a 2-way discussion about the progress of their child?”



Community Engagement

Students in schools with strong community supports are supported by a network of providers. It is extremely important for school leaders to cultivate and build relationships with community partners and organizations. There are many organizations that want to help, but

haven't been engaged in the conversation.

School leaders should be proactive at soliciting these providers, rather than waiting until they need them. This allows for quick response to struggling students.

Furthermore, these partners should play an integral role into ensuring the student's well-being. These students will be part of our adult society one day.



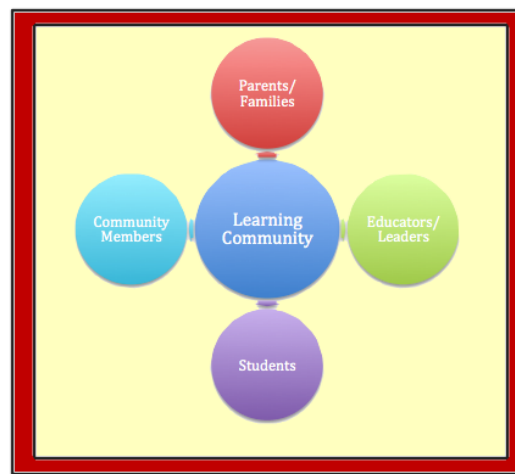
Strategies to consider

- 1) Create a coffee talk group comprised of family and community stakeholders that meets regularly to discuss school initiatives.
- 2) Hold a community breakfast to discuss ways in which your students can help their organizations.
- 3) Develop Family Nights that include parental participation in learning the new Indiana Academic Standards. Have parents rotate through activities.
- 4) Encourage [Hoosier Family of Readers](#) participation with parents.
- 5) Check out the best practices and self-assessment tools from our [Family Friendly Program Page](#)



Family Friendly School Certification

The Indiana Department of Education is pleased to announce the Indiana Family Friendly Schools Designation Program effective on July 1, 2013 via Senate Enrolled Act No. 422. The Indiana Family Friendly Schools Designation Program application is available on the [IDOE website](#). The purpose of the program is to focus on addressing the academic, physical, emotional and social needs of students while providing the needed resources and fostering the active involvement of families through schools and the community. It is a State recognition program for schools that excel in the involvement of families and communities in their children's education. Schools may voluntarily request an assessment from the Indiana Department of Education for the purpose of evaluating and improving family and community engagement in the school. The principal of a school wishing to be designated as a Family Friendly School must submit an application packet for IDOE assessment no later than **October 24, 2014**. Applications received after this date will not be considered until the next review cycle in the subsequent school year. Please refer to the Family Friendly Schools Program Handbook for further information. Questions? Contact Leroy Robinson - lrobison@doe.in.gov; phone: 317-234-5663.



Resources



Check out the [Outreach page surrounding Turnaround Principle 8—Effective Family and Community Engagement](#). There are tons of resources and documents that will provide extra guidance and support.



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Other ways to connect to IDOE

www.doe.in.gov/outreach

[Online Communities of Practice](#)

[Learning Connection](#)

Facebook—[Indiana Department of Education](#)

Twitter—[@EducateIN](#)

Pinterest—[INeLearn](#)

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

ON FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Welcome every student's family as your education partner.

Assume every family wants the best for their children. Parents look to you as the expert. Guide them on what you think they need to do to help their student achieve success.

Communicate frequently and in the way that works best for each family.

Whether via phone, email, text message or handwritten notes, communicate with each family in a way that not only reaches them—but also generates a response. Include positive feedback to build trust and respect. Seek translation support from your school if there is a language difference.

Teach families how to support student success.

Like students, families don't know the education terminology you do. Describe what you need families to do at home in simple and specific terms. Use examples whenever possible. The more you share, the more families will understand their role as your education partner.

Encourage families to speak up for the needs of their student.

Let families know that they are your education partner. Explain that you need them to share the other factors that may affect their student's performance so that you can help navigate challenges or offer more support.

Share power with families and students when working to improve the school.

Empower families and students to contribute their voices, time and energy to making your school a better place to learn—and to work.

Collaborate with community partners that can support families.

Learning happens in the classroom, in the home and in the community. Connect families to the resources available to enrich the educational experience.